



# Maricopa County

## News Release

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## First Human Case of West Nile Virus Imported from Colorado

(Phoenix) – Maricopa County saw its first case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a 59-year-old man who contracted the disease in Colorado. The man sought medical treatment at a local hospital after becoming ill with fever, weakness, dizziness, vomiting and headache approximately four days after returning to Phoenix. He was treated for meningitis, an infection of the central nervous system that can be caused by WNV. The man recovered and was discharged from the hospital.

So far, there are no cases of people having contracted WNV in Maricopa County, though infected mosquitoes, birds and horses have been found in several locations across the state, and a Pima County woman recently contracted WNV.

The first cases of WNV in North America were discovered in New York in 1999, and the virus has since spread rapidly westward. This year, WNV has been identified in 45 states and has caused 7328 illnesses and 153 deaths. In fact, Colorado has been suffering from the most widespread outbreak of WNV this year; so County health officials are not surprised that Maricopa County's first case was a Colorado import.

WNV is transmitted to humans only through the bite on an infected mosquito, and less than one percent of all mosquitoes are infected. It is not contagious, nor can it be contracted from an infected animal, such as a bird or horse. Only one in 150 people infected will become seriously ill; severe illness is far more common among the elderly. More information on WNV illness can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>.

There are several measures each individual can take to prevent WNV infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires and other containers.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- When outdoors wear long sleeves and long pants to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outdoors wear a mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- Report dead birds to local authorities.

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More information on mosquito reduction and avoidance and dead bird reporting can be found at: <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/water/vector/backyard.asp> or by calling (602) 506-6616.

Maricopa County Department of Public Health will continue working to protect the community with an enhanced surveillance program including mosquito sampling and testing, testing of dead birds, evaluation of equine neurological illnesses and human cases of meningitis and encephalitis.

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